

POST-EVENT FINAL REPORT

Event: 16th International Junior Academy – Summer School

Dates & Location: July 16–18, 2026 | Padua, Italy

Attendee: Krystal April Joy O. Curso, M.D.

Home Institution: University of the Philippines Manila - Philippine General Hospital

Introduction & Acknowledgments

I extend my sincere gratitude to the German Division of the International Academy of Pathology and the Vladimir Totović Foundation for awarding me a travel grant and bursary to attend the 16th International Junior Academy Summer School in Padua, Italy. The financial support provided by the sponsors made it possible for me to participate in this valuable educational milestone, which significantly enriched my diagnostic skills, broadened my international academic perspective, and provided crucial opportunities for professional networking.

Scientific Learnings and Subspecialty Highlights

The scientific program comprised high-yield lectures delivered by world-renowned experts, providing practical, state-of-the-art frameworks across key subspecialties in surgical pathology. In soft tissue pathology, Professor Angelo Paolo Dei Tos outlined systematic diagnostic algorithms for subtyping mesenchymal tumors, offering clear strategies for navigating spindle cell morphology and diagnostic traps on limited core needle biopsies. Professor Maurice B. Loughrey addressed polyps of the lower gastrointestinal tract, clarifying updated criteria for serrated lesions and dysplasia grading that directly influence clinical follow-up protocols.

In thoracic and dermatopathology, Professor Reinhard Büttner presented actionable strategies for prioritizing predictive biomarker testing on scant lung biopsies, while Professor Daniela Massi guided participants through the subtle histological features needed to differentiate borderline melanocytic lesions from early melanoma mimics. Subspecialty insights continued with Professor Glen Kristiansen's presentation on prostate diagnostics, which emphasized nuances in ISUP/Gleason grading, rare variants, and avoiding overdiagnosis in benign mimickers. Professor Irene Esposito provided practical guidance on interpreting challenging pancreatobiliary brushings and core biopsies, and Professor Magali Lacroix-Triki covered predictive biomarkers and scoring systems for evaluating residual disease following neoadjuvant therapy in breast cancer.

Active Contribution and Case Presentation

A central highlight of my attendance was actively contributing to the scientific discourse during the oral presentation sessions on Saturday, July 18. I had the privilege of presenting a complex clinical case entitled "*Mesenchymal Chondrosarcoma: An Illustrative Case*" during the session moderated by Professor Irene Esposito and Professor Angelo Paolo Dei Tos. Presenting before an international audience and receiving direct, constructive feedback from expert moderators

regarding our differential diagnosis and immunohistochemical approach was an invaluable learning experience. The dynamic question-and-answer period that followed deepened my understanding of international consensus criteria for rare entities.

Global Perspectives on Pathology Training

Beyond the formal lectures, one of the most rewarding aspects of the Summer School was engaging in informal dialogues with early-career colleagues from across the world. Discussions with fellow trainees provided a fascinating window into how pathology residency programs and specialist training pathways are structured internationally—including in the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Kazakhstan, Italy, Austria, and Ukraine.

We compared board certification models, and discussed varying levels of trainee autonomy and reporting responsibility across European health systems. Interacting with colleagues from Central Asia and Eastern Europe underscored how different resource environments influence diagnostic workflows, highlighting the balance between advanced molecular diagnostics and traditional morphological skill.

Evaluation and Feedback

The Summer School was an exceptional academic success. The intimate atmosphere allowed for unparalleled access to leading experts, creating a supportive environment where young pathologists felt comfortable asking questions and exchanging ideas. The integration of core subspecialty lectures with interactive case discussions ensured high educational engagement throughout. Furthermore, the social program—including the Welcome Reception at Restaurant Exforo, the guided city tour of Padua, and the group dinner at Caffè Pedrocchi—provided ideal settings for building lasting international connections. As a constructive suggestion for future editions, organizers might consider incorporating a dedicated round-table session on global pathology training, allowing for a structured exchange on international curricula and career development.

Conclusion

Attending the 16th International Junior Academy Summer School directly enhanced my diagnostic capabilities and reinforced my commitment to continuous learning and clinical excellence. I look forward to sharing the diagnostic insights gained from this event with my colleagues and co-residents through upcoming institutional clinical presentations. I remain deeply grateful to the organizers, faculty, and sponsors for making this transformative experience possible.

Submitted by:

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